



T H E

Button-makers CASE.

There are but Three Things considerable offered against the Button-makers Bill.

First. They propose an Imposition of 20*l.* *per Cent.* to be laid on Foreign Hair Buttons : To which 'tis answered.

Answer 1st. If such an Imposition were duly answered to the King, it would raise the Price of Buttons to such a degree, as would be a heavy Tax and Charge upon the People of *England*.

Second. 'Tis plain, whatever Impositions are laid upon Buttons, there will be little or nothing answered to the King.

For if the Importers, as they pretend in their Reasons, can elude the strictest Act of Prohibition, and bring in Hair Buttons by stealth, they will run them with much more ease when they have an Act of Parliament to License their Importation.

For Hair Buttons may lie Eight or Ten Days in Water without changing Colour; and the Merchants, when they import them, usually throw them into the River, and there let them lie till Opportunity serves to take them out, and cheat Their Majesties of their Customs.

And that this is the Practice is evident, from those few Entries which have been made at the Custom-House. For although very great Quantities of Foreign Hair Buttons have been Imported within a Year last past, yet all the Money which hath been paid for the Customs, doth not amount to 100*l.* and the greatest part of that hath been paid since the Button-makers have been prosecuting this Bill.

Third. The Mischiefs and Inconveniences which would accrue to Their Majesties and the People of *England*, by the Importation of Foreign Hair Buttons, would be much greater then the

Benefit, the Button-Trade of *England* would wholly be ruined, and above Sixty Thousand Persons bred up and employed therein be utterly undone, and become chargeable to their several Parishes, which would be a great Charge and Tax upon the People of *England* in general.

Many Thousands being employed in this Trade in *London*, *Macclesfield* in the County of *Chester*, and Thirty Miles thereabouts; as also in *Sherborn* in the County of *Dorset*; *Oxford*, *Cambridge*, *Yorkshire*, &c. and all Eminent Towns in *England*.

Secondly, Many Thousands of People who now pay Taxes to their Majesties, will, in a short time, by the Importation of Hair Buttons, be wholly disabled to pay any thing at all; which would be a greater Loss to Their Majesties, then could be repaired by the Imposition of 20*l.* *per Cent.* upon Hair Buttons.

Objection 2^d. Next 'tis Objected, That if the Bill for Prohibiting Foreign Hair Buttons should pass, there would not be above Two hundred Men more employed then now in the Button-Trade.

Answer. This is a very great Mistake; for, upon a hearing before the late King *James* in Council, it was proved upon Oath, That several Persons who, before Hair Buttons were imported, employed Twelve hundred Persons at Work, had not then Trade enough to employ One hundred, the Button-Trade being so much decayed by the Importation of Foreign Hair Buttons, and the like is in proportion to all other Button-makers.

Objection 3^d. The Third Objection against the Bill is, if the Bill should pass, the Button-makers having the Trade in their own Hands, would Enhance the Price of their Buttons, and make worse Goods.

To which 'tis answered, That Experience hath shew'd the contrary; for, during the time that Foreign Hair Buttons were prohibited by the late King's Proclamation, the Button-makers did not exact one Farthing more for their Buttons, or make worse Buttons.

But 'tis more than probable, if Hair Buttons are prohibited, their price will be lessened.

For all the Buttons which are imported are made of *English* Horse-hair, which is exported in such great Quantities, that thereby the price of Hair is encreased from Sixteen Pence to Six Shillings the pound.

But by the Prohibition of Foreign Hair Buttons, very little of our Hair will be exported, and by that means it will be reduced to its ancient price; and consequently the price of Buttons will be proportionably abated.

As to that part of the Objection, That by a Prohibition Hair Buttons made here will be worse; 'tis Answered, The Button-makers understand their Interest better, then to make bad Buttons; for 'tis in that as in other Commodities, he that makes the best Goods hath the best Trade.

Besides, they have so severely felt the smart of a Foreign Trade, that they will make it their utmost Care to do nothing which may provoke the Parliament to lay open the Trade again, and thereby expose them to the like Miseries for the future.

And therefore 'tis humbly hoped the Bill shall pass.